

June 13, 2007

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Lynchburg employees were notified today that an accidental disclosure of personal information had occurred. According to Margaret Schmitt, Human Resources Director, a document intended for use by vendors submitting a response to a prescription services request was posted to the City's website on May 22, 2007. The information inadvertently contained prescription drug and other personal information of approximately 1200 City employees and retirees.

An employee brought the mistake to the attention of Human Resources on June 4. Immediate action was taken to begin the process of removing the information. These actions included:

- Removing the document from the City's website
- Working with Google™ to remove the data from their search index
- Reviewing and complying with actions required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Act
- Disciplining the employees responsible for the error and
- Notifying all employees and retirees of the accidental disclosure

According to Schmitt, a letter is being mailed to each affected employee today explaining the situation. The letter will also contain information on how to monitor for unauthorized use of the information.

"There had been very few "hits" on the page containing the information so we believe that the chance of someone illegally using this information is very small. Nevertheless, we will be working with employees and doing whatever we can to ensure that no employee is harmed by this mistake," said Schmitt. "We've also taken steps to ensure that this doesn't happen again and we sincerely apologize to the employees affected by this." Human Resources staff will be meeting with employees to answer any questions they may have.

In the e-mail sent to employees today, City Manager Kim Payne said, "We are aware of our legal and ethical obligations in this matter and are taking them very seriously. Over the last few days, rather than immediately notifying employees, we have focused our efforts on removing the data from the Internet to prevent the curious from searching for personal data that is not their own and to minimize further risk of exposure."

The City has established an email address (IDsupport@lynchburgva.gov) and a hotline number (434-455-3964) for employees and retirees to contact Human Resources with questions or concerns. The City is committed to providing appropriate information and assisting individual employees in any way possible as we deal with this matter.

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